

HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS

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Without Interracial Justice

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MANY ARE CALLED ... but

by Allan A. Archibald

CAMP So and So was just like any other army camp. There were plenty of throaty sergeants barking, "HUP ... TOO ... FREE ... HORE," at platoons of smoothly marching men. And there were just as many reluctant privates too, whose sole joy lay in avoiding the wrath of enthusiastic non-coms. But this was the Army — something to gripe about — something to shout about just to make life happier and cheerier.

With the present status of the Negro in some parts of America, one would gather that the Negro soldier would have a little bit more to gripe about than the ordinary soldier. I was a Negro soldier. I won't decide that question for you. You draw your own conclusions.

The present crop of Negro soldiers is a young, alert, and intelligent group for the most part. Quite a few of them have been commissioned officers by virtue of their splendid backgrounds, willingness to learn, and qualities of leadership. Few of these Negro soldiers of today want to take a back seat as far as this business of winning a war is concerned. We want to fight. The stake in this war is one of securing freedom also for the less fortunate nations of the world. In this the Negro has a special interest, together with the Chinese, Indians, and the European minorities, for over here in America, some people are not quite sure that Negroes, yes, even Negroes in the service uniform of the United States ... are free people.

CAMP So and So was just like any other army camp. There were white troops stationed there of course; and there were Negro troops. As one would most naturally expect those fellows of Northern background, regardless of race, fraternized frequently in the Post Exchanges (Army snack shops) and virtually every place on the reservation. But with the influx of Southern troops, such practices are frowned upon with little result. Most of the Southern Camp So and So's have separate Post Exchanges

and Service Clubs for the Negro soldiers. And even in the North, this can be found ... perhaps because of strained racial relations, actual racial conflict, or merely the whim of the high commanding officials.

Deep down in his heart the Negro soldier resents all this mollicoddling. It definitely affects his morale. And though there are many accounts of heroic deeds of Negro servicemen on the battle fronts, outright segregation and discrimination — a definite smear on the cause of Freedom — continues.

WE, the Negro soldiers at Camp So and So weren't a church-going group as a whole. There weren't more than 12 or 13 Catholics among us, and most of these fellows were reluctant to take their religion too seriously. Just the same there were many who went to Church regularly, whether it was a Protestant service or a Catholic Mass. Part of the regular routine of Army life was our nightly bull-session where it seemed as if every conceivable problem under the sun would be thrashed out. Many times we didn't come to any definite conclusions, but none could say that we didn't have a healthy discussion. When these discussions ran on religion and the race problems, many of the fellows inquired as to what the Catholic Church was doing to help further race relations. It was no easy matter to tell them that the doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church forbade any form of discrimination against racial or political minorities. It was also difficult to explain to them why the Church wasn't doing anything about the treatment of Negro soldiers in Southern camps. I knew they were referring specifically to the Catholic chaplains and their duties and responsibilities at the various Army posts. Strangely enough, there was a copy of Father LaFarge's "Interracial Justice" on the library shelf in our recreation room. And it was read by quite a few of the fellows.

Some of them were New Yorkers and had seen the Friendship House center on 135th St. There had been no reaction on their part to it, positive or negative. One soldier in particular, who had attended CCNY, and who had slightly Communist leanings, questioned the sincerity of the white personnel at Friendship House. He insisted that they were in it for some sort of personal gain. He quoted the Marxian tenets. I quoted what little I knew of Scholastic philosophy. Eventually we would end up with atheism, his stronghold. Then

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S. FRANCIS



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HARLEM FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS

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WHAT CAN WE DO ?

RACE RIOTS have again focused the eyes of the American white world on the Negro. Once more the people of good will ask themselves—WHAT CAN WE DO? Clearly they see that the cause of all the latest disturbances lies predominantly in them—the whites of America. For, as we have said many times before, and are never tired of repeating . . . there is no Negro problem in America . . . ONLY A WHITE ONE.

This little paper has in season and out of it, endeavored to present both the dire plight of the Negro in our midst, and the principles stemming from God Himself, by which alone this tragic problem can be lastingly solved. But principles enunciated in the void of intellectual discussions are sterile unless put into execution and integrated into our personal, national and collective lives. Especially those of Catholic Americans. There are, therefore, multiple answers to that momentous question—WHAT CAN WE DO? Let us consider some of them frankly.

When into some well-established Catholic ALL WHITE Parish move some Negro Catholic families, the parishioners, remembering that they are CATHOLIC, must welcome the newcomers with friendliness and pleasure. Make them feel at home among them, invite them to join the Parish societies, help, not hinder, the good Pastor, and the Superior of the Parochial school on the subject of attendance of Negro children there. Nor start an exodus from the neighborhood. For the strange, un-Christian attitude of mind that provokes such moves is utterly (or should be) foreign to the mind of the Catholic Church—Spouse of the Crucified, Who died to make all men brothers.

FAR TOO OFTEN holy Pastors and good school Nuns are gravely embarrassed by such an attitude of their white parishioners, which takes time to eliminate, hurts the spirit of the parish and deeply wounds, as well as sometimes kills, the faith in the souls of God's colored children. Let us be done with such a narrow attitude of mind.

The same attitude must be changed in parents who send their children to Catholic High Schools and Colleges. Always alert to fulfill God's laws, more and more Catholic Colleges naturally open their doors to Negro applicants, but each and everyone of them is unnecessarily subject to a barrage of ignorant criticism from Catholics who should know better. We would help to kill future race riots, if we changed our strange, pre-conceived, un-Christen prejudice on that score.

Patients of Catholic hospitals must do likewise. By being ready to be nursed by Negro nurses and attended by Negro doctors. For it stands to reason that both Catholic boys and girls attracted to these professions would choose and have a right to the training and education facilities of Catholic institutions in preference to secular ones. For they too have a soul to save, and keep, and it is best saved and kept through knowledge acquired at the feet of Catholic teachings permeating all other knowledge that must be theirs.

STENOGRAPHERS, typists, sales clerks and workers in unions and out, especially Catholic ones, must face and work for the acceptance of Negroes into their midst. For thousands of Negro boys and girls, well-trained to enter these fields, are barred from them by the un-American, un-Christian attitudes exhibited by these, their potential fellow-workers, of white color.

Legislation is timely and good. But legislation without the inner consent of all the people is a waste of motion. Let each and everyone of us in America give that inner consent, to eliminate the causes of friction among Races in America, by living individually as well as collectively, the very spirit of our democracy and its institutions and laws. And let us Catholics, who have the immense privilege of being able to integrate these tenets into the sublime doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ . . . LEAD THE WAY.

CHICAGO HOUSE

309 East 43rd Street

by Ann Harrigan

SAINTE PETER CLAVER is a big saint in the annals of Friendship House. So naturally we had a special celebration at supper for his feast, September 9. The beautiful Collect of the Mass for his feast was read after Grace, and I think it bears repeating: "O God, who didst strengthen Blessed Peter with wondrous charity and patience in aiding the Negroes sold into slavery, whom Thou wert calling to the knowledge of Thy Name; grant to us, at his intercession, that we may seek after the things that are of Jesus Christ, and love our neighbors in deed and in truth. Amen." Later on during supper, Alice Ann Ryan and Mary Alice read the Epistle and Gospel of the day, and some excerpts from "Saint in the Slave Trade," by Lunn. Much lively discussion followed as to the things we could learn from St. Peter for our own deeper realization of what the Mystical Body of Christ means.

Father Kilgallen of Mundelein spoke on the Mystical Body of Christ one Monday evening, and he put the whole business of Catholics being prejudiced into a nutshell—"Any Christian who harbors race prejudice is living a lie." In crystal clear terms he explained how it is impossible to want to be a follower of Christ and keep hate alive in our hearts for any one. The two things just cannot exist together. "He who says he loves God and not his neighbor is a liar," says St. John. And again, "How can you love God whom you do not see, if you love not man whom you do see?" Pretty strong language from the beloved disciple, the gentle John who tired his hearers with his oft repeated, "Little children, love one another."

Rooms are just one thing there aren't any of in war booming over crowded Chicago. Yet that was my job . . . for the past month . . . to locate rooms for our new staff workers—Mary Purd'homme, Elizabeth Teevny (Teevy to old FHers), Betty Schneider, and others. So I just asked Blessed Martin to take care of things. Willie Howard snickered a bit at this . . . But what do you know? Blessed Martin did.

WE ARE fast becoming a league of nations, what with Mary's Texas accent, and Teevy's Scotch burr, and Ken's Louisiana drawl, and my Brooklynes—all we need is Betty's broad A's to complete the picture. Teevy is afraid of getting lonesome, and Mary is . . . but

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WHY NOT COLLECT TANKERS?

by Eddie Doherty

ONE of the happiest young women I know collects tankers. She lives in San Francisco, but her collection is scattered throughout the nation; and now and then, but quite rarely, she has a chance to take a few weeks off and go visiting them.

At first I didn't understand. What was a tanker? And how did one go about collecting them?

"It just happens that my friends are all tankers," the young lady answered. "That is, they dived into shallow ponds, or into bathing pools with little or no water in them. They broke their necks or their backs; and they lie in bed all the rest of their lives and exude happiness."

"So they dived onto a rock or onto a cement floor and lived happily ever after?", I asked.

"Exactly. Is it so strange?"

I remembered Gertski, and decided it wasn't strange at all.

Gertski—she gave herself that name—was not exactly a tanker. But you could call her one. She had been an invalid since her childhood. For eight years she had been bedridden. She lived in unceasing pain. She was always close to death. She had one doctor after another. All but one gave her up. All but one said she could not possibly live another month, another week, another day. Many times she was anointed.

But each time she received the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and each time she received the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Gertski recovered.

GERTSKI lived in Wolfram Street, in Chicago. Her name was Gertrude Lakowski. A priest brought me in to see her, quite a few years ago. Of my own accord I went to see her, thereafter, as often as I could.

At first I went because I thought—great-hearted guy that I am—that I might be able to cheer her up a little. I learned soon, however, that I was going to her for cheer. No matter how acutely she suffered, she had a power of making other people happy.

Even as she lay in her coffin, with her rosary in her hands, she had that power of spreading happiness.

Pain? "This is nothing to what my Boy Friend went through," she would say. Her Boy Friend had died for her. She was happy to suffer and to die for Him. Someday I want to write much more about Gertski. I merely mention her now as a "case."

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THE BARONESS JOTS IT DOWN

THANK YOU . . . to all the good friends of Friendship House and mine, who have so kindly written to me congratulating us—Eddie Doherty and myself, on our recent wedding (June 25, 1943). We extend our thanks. Our deep and appreciative thanks.

And because so many in their letters asked if my marriage would have any effect on my work in Friendship House, I decided to give the answer, via the pages of this little paper, through which for the past years, we of Friendship House have shared with all our friends and readers, both our joys and sorrows.

No—my marriage will not affect my work in Friendship House. For Catholic Action—Friendship House style—encompassed marriage, when God sees fit to give BOTH PARTIES a special vocation for it.

This, Deo Gratias, is the case with Eddie and me. Friendship House, therefore, has simply acquired a Father, and it needed one badly. For we also have young men working for us. And they will now get much better advice and direction from Eddie than they did from me in the past.

EDDIE has embraced our way of life. Always he has been attracted to the Negro Apostolate. How could it be otherwise, with Blessed Martin his special pal? (Don't tell Eddie, but I think it was the same Bl. Martin who brought us together . . . perhaps he knew before I did, that Friendship House needed a Father. Who can ever tell with Saints . . . what they are going to do next!)

Therefore, I shall continue as before, to look after the two Friendship Houses in New York and Chicago, in my new capacity as Director General, since Nancy Grenell is Local Director of Harlem, and Ann Harrigan of Chicago. I moved "up" . . . to lecture, write and also to start our Friendship House Training School, so badly needed for the many young applicants to our Staff Workers, who have come forward in the last year.

We had a beautiful wedding, Eddie and I. His Excellency, Bishop Bernard J. Sheil of Chicago married us

on the glorious morning of St. John the Baptist's Feast . . . he of the "Make straight the way of the Lord" . . . a sentence we decided to make our own, in our humble service to the same Master.

I wore white and blue, for Our Lady, into whose hands I have put my married life within the Friendship House circle. Just now we are living in a little furnished flat. We could not find an apartment in the Harlem of Chicago—the South Side—for there are none to be had, since there are 99,000 people per square mile in that overcrowded Negro district of the Windy City.

Please say a little prayer for us, that we might live up, in full, to the gracious vocation God has given us . . . to the Lay Apostolate of Catholic Action, Friendship House style. And thanks again.

CHRISTMAS is close for the Armed Forces. We are urged to mail our gifts now. We of Friendship House in New York and Chicago, are also thinking of our kids in the various theatres of war. Many of you have "adopted" one or more of them. But we hope all of them will be remembered for Christmas in a *special manner*—you know what we mean. Each house has a list of its boys. Won't you write and get a name and send him that little, extra homemade treat that makes all the difference between a REAL CHRISTMAS . . . and a blue one? If you are in Illinois, write to Ann Harrigan, 309 East 43rd St., Chicago. Otherwise, to Nancy Grenell, 34 West 135th St., New York 30, N. Y.

And then there are the children of Harlem and Chicago. War or no war, they expect, talk and thrill at the thought of the Birth of the Christ Child and the Christ-Mass season. They will, in their childlike faith expect presents, a party or two, goodies to eat, and maybe even a Christmas treat. Children are like that. So right now, we thought we'd open a Christmas fund. To ourselves we call it the we-can't-let-the-kiddies-down-fund . . . but all you have to do is to earmark your cheque or cash "Christmas Fund." Will you . . . please, again!

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE SPEAKS

by Catherine de Hueck

Timely Pamphlet on the Negro

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CHICAGO HOUSE

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when the season starts in earnest and Father Cantwell starts his bi-weekly talks to the Staff, as he does today, FH ideals will begin to mean more, and we will all understand what is behind this offering of ourselves to the Lord, for life and every day.

Bill Lynch left for a job at Daleiden's, but he is still very much with us as a volunteer, doing those hundred odd jobs that make the difference between functioning smoothly or not. Take that desk, for example. He and Clif Thomas went to work on it, and two nights later we had one ready to use. Ken varnished it. Result: everybody had a hand in it. Except Marcella and her mother who came all the way from Wilmette to sew the new, swanky covers the Volunteers bought for our wicker set. Kate and Lorena supported also. Much painting and cleaning goes on these days. Ken invented a new way to wax the floor—with his feet. The B says this is the Russian way.

SPEAKING of the Baroness—she is doing some spiritual streamlining these days, she says, and you would believe it if you were to see us try to overhaul the 2000 books of the library, while all other business goes on as usual. Two thousand books—say it slowly—and you may get a faint idea of the gargantuan task of checking and accessioning we have. Before this, the files came in for some housecleaning and reorganizing . . . so, all in all, there is a lot of physical AND spiritual streamlining going on here. To see Mary, Ken, Mary Alice and I rushing around the room looking for the hidden book or the absconding number, an onlooker would have thought it was one of those old time movies accelerated in double time.

Blanche Scholes has been a most loyal, understanding worker, and I might add, quite an original cook. But you should have seen how wide she opened her arms when Teevy walked in the door. For this means that Blanche will be free to do her beloved music and playshop dramatics with the kids on a full time basis. So with Blanche in the Casita, Mary in the Office, Ken in the Library, Teevy as Housemother, and Betty slated to come for the family and social work, we may hope to settle down to some good solid work in the months ahead.

With the Holy Family as our model, we have but to follow the virtues of their hidden life—poverty, hard work, obedience, and above all, charity . . . the great flower of Charity that will bloom only after we have tilled the soil of our souls and cultivated first in patience and love, those unspectacular hidden virtues.

TANKERS

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SINCE she died I have met other "tankers," other shut-ins, other bedridden patients who have the same eery quality that was Gertski's.

There's a man on the South side of Chicago who lives in agony — joyful agony, if you please—and who talks about Our Blessed Lady in the same familiar and endearing way as Gertski discussed her Boy Friend.

There is a little girl who must die soon of a complication of diseases, who has the merriest laugh and the oddest views of God and His saints, and the most naive way of spilling joy upon her visitors.

You probably know a few yourself who suffer excruciating torture for the love of God and the reparation for sins. If you don't, you can find them.

Some day when you feel glum, ill-treated, unfortunate, or just low down, go make yourself a collection of them. Or start collecting when you are thinking of an apostolate for yourself. You'll find as much happiness in visiting them as you can stand. You'll find more love of God than you dreamed existed on this earth.

You'll come away from your collection feeling humble, I'll admit, and grateful for the blessings you have received. But that won't do you any harm.

MANY ARE CALLED

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it would be time to go to sleep again.

If the Negro soldier believes that he hasn't got much to fight for, it is the fault of the white American. It is the fault of the white American who still insists on Jim Crow and the sundry other forms of discrimination. If the Negro individual, be he serviceman or not, still believes that he has more to gain from a socialist set-up than from good American democracy, then the people of America had better be careful. Fortunately, I do not believe that such sentiments are representative of the young or old Negro of today.

If the Negro soldier is to believe that he has a lot to fight for, let's start right here in America to better equip our army for the battle of freedom. Do away with Jim Crow practices on military reservations or in their vicinity first. And do not compromise!

ONCE the Negro soldier believes that he is REALLY a part of American society, not a "minority outcast" or a necessary evil, you won't find recurrences of those disturbances which have been taking place in Southern army camps. You won't find the civilian population berating or belittling Negro servicemen in uniform. It would definitely help the battle for Freedom. It would cause the sacrifice of any number of Negro soldiers on the altar of Freedom to be that more efficacious.

Joe Louis said that we're going to win this war because, "God is on our side." We will. God and the love of God means charity, justice and equality for all. This, true soldiers of Christ never forget, and the sooner we get the battle over, the better. So, let's go!

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